

**PROCESS THEOLOGY AS A BASIS FOR
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
IN AN ISLAND BOARDING SCHOOL**

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Presented to
the Faculty of The School of Theology
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**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
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ABSTRACT

The final goal of this project is a curriculum for ninth graders in a course on world religions and early humanity, with an emphasis on the Christian faith. The writer serves as chaplain and teacher at Mid-Pacific Institute, a boarding high school in Honolulu.

The writer began by reviewing his experiences at the school and by interviewing other faculty, noting the special problems of self-acceptance and interpersonal relationships caused by the wide ethnic mix among students. Those of Japanese ancestry, the largest ethnic group, experience a conflict between eastern and western values: between the Oriental desire to please authority and the American values of individualism and rebellion; between a desire for advanced education and a distrust of intellectualism; between a valuing of American music and media and a lack of ease with many Caucasians. The greatest student need seems to be for a sense of one's own validity and worth.

Contemporary educational theories which are aimed at the development of self-esteem were then criticized in the light of the thought of Alfred North Whitehead and other contributors to process theology. Whitehead holds that only what is unitary and actual has agency. Forces such as evolution or gravity are abstractions and have no

power to influence the world. Only what is a subject for itself, a unified whole which prehends the world beyond itself, has ability for action and influence. Electrons are examples of simple unitary actualities. Humans are more complex, while composed of these lesser beings. God is the most complex unitary actuality, comprised of all lesser ones yet not simply their total. God lures all actualities toward broader and deeper experience. John B. Cobb, Jr. holds that the ultimate lure of God is seen in Jesus' call of persons toward an unself-seeking love in which one comes to care more about the future of another than of oneself. Henry Nelson Wieman describes God as the creative process bringing about human good through four stages: confrontation with another's qualitative meaning, comparison with one's own values and meanings, integration of steps one and two in a new synthesis, and richer human community which results.

These ideas are used to criticize contemporary educational approaches:

The "open classroom" style underestimates persons' desire to avoid the painful experience of confrontation with others' qualitative meaning.

The behavioral goals and objectives approach fails to recognize that future goals are always transformed in the process of their attainment, and that to cling to

predetermined objectives can block the creative process.

"Values clarification" methods do not demand a confrontation with others' qualitative meanings, but rely upon recognition of one's own values. The struggle of integration is necessary for the growth process.

When carefully employed, however, these educational methods may assist in the development of self-esteem. A unit centering on Golding's Lord of the Flies challenges students to draw connections between the book, early human history, and life in the school dormitory. A unit in which each student writes an autobiography encourages an affirmation of one's own ethnic heritage and interaction with others of different origins.

Private prayer and shared worship are shown to be essential in the life of a Christian educator who seeks to be open to the creative actuality of God.

PREFACE

It is the writer's intention to bring the thought of various process theologians to bear on themes in contemporary education, and to use the conclusions to develop a classroom approach for high school students in an independent boarding school in Honolulu, Hawaii.

The writer has served for eight years as chaplain at Mid-Pacific Institute in Honolulu, and this project is part of an attempt to develop a clearer rationale for a ninth grade course in early civilization and world religions. The Judeo-Christian tradition is emphasized.

The opening chapter presents a description of the school and the students. The second chapter introduces process theology which will form a basis for a new look at the school's educational goals. The third chapter is a study of certain themes in contemporary education criticized in the light of process theology. In the fourth chapter, these themes are put into operation through the development and description of two academic units in the World Civilization course at Mid-Pacific. Chapter four also includes a consideration of the role of prayer and the sharing in Christian community as part of the instructor's preparation.

Chapter I

MID-PACIFIC INSTITUTE

Mid-Pacific Institute is a private four-year high school serving 400 students from throughout the Pacific area, located on the island of Oahu near the University of Hawaii. The school was first established in 1865, and then moved to its present site in 1908. Students at Mid-Pacific come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the wide ethnic diversity of Hawaii. A large percentage are Americans of Japanese ancestry whose grandparents or great grandparents came to the islands early in the century as contract laborers. Many parents of the students also attended Mid-Pacific; and a number of the fathers served in the Second World War or in the Korean conflict. While they reflect much of western culture, students show a growing interest in their Japanese heritage. Their island form of the American youth culture is expressed in their taste in clothing, music and movies. They consider Japanese tourists quaint and somewhat embarrassing; and students who come directly from Japan to attend the school are not automatically accepted. Pidgin English is the lingua franca of the dormitories, and it includes a smattering of Japanese phrases. Foods like saimin and arare are common in students' rooms.

Most parents of Mid-Pacific students are owners of small businesses or are employed by island companies, civil service or the military. In a large number of families, both the parents work outside the home. There are also parents who hold government jobs in other parts of the Pacific, and so send their children to the school at government expense. Most students attend because the school is noted for its effective college preparation; but some of them are in residence because of their home situations or because they have experienced academic or social difficulties at other schools.

Besides Japanese Americans, there are the Chinese (locals of Chinese ancestry, perhaps 10 per cent of the enrollment), haoles (Caucasians--10 to 15 per cent), and a growing number of students from other regions of the Pacific, including Samoa, Micronesia and Asia. There are a few students from the mainland United States, and some local students of mixed ancestry including Hawaiian, Filipino and Portuguese.

The two groups which find the most difficulty fitting in are the haoles and the international students. Haoles are stereotyped as too verbal and pushy; and foreign students are sometimes thought of as "too clickish" (because they stay with others who speak their native language). Because foreign students are often outstanding in

mathematics and science courses, the local students sometimes feel an unfair competition. Some of the haoles and international students seem unaware of the subtleties of island culture, and are considered boorish and tactless.

Mid-Pacific's missionary origins are still seen in the form of the religious program which is noted below, but also in such remnants as a remedial speech program for local students. The aim of the program is not to cure students of their pidgin English, but to give them the ability to switch to standard English in appropriate situations. The fact that most of the faculty and administration are Caucasians who originally came from the mainland also contributes to the atmosphere of the school; this is discussed below in the section on students of Japanese ancestry.

Mid-Pacific struggles with a bookish, unathletic reputation. Even though about 70 per cent of the students participate in an organized sport each year, the small physical size of the students and the small enrollment become significant factors on the basketball court and football field. The enrollment of several Samoan students, who tend to be of larger build, is beginning to change this image.

Although the school is considered a college preparatory institution, many students enter at below grade level in one or more subjects. The local students usually are

more proficient in science and mathematics than in social studies and language arts. There is a wide range of ability, coupled with the severe language problems of a few local students and of many students from other countries.

The school only now is beginning to admit day students, and most young people who attend Mid-Pacific live in the dormitories. Thus there is little escape from their normal failures and blunders, and the problems spill over from classroom to dormitory, and vice versa.

The dormitories are supervised by an adult staff, but are organized into sub-units overseen by "Senators" (senior students selected for special responsibilities). These leaders have found increasing difficulty in enforcing rules, as the aura of authority has faded throughout American culture. Occasionally this means that the dormitories are somewhat barbaric, with younger, weaker persons singled out for harassment; and tattlers are looked down upon.

Students grumble about the rules and restrictions and what is considered to be inadequate food in the dining hall. Yet on free week ends a large number choose to remain on campus; and when polled as to the benefits of attending the school, they give these common responses:

"The dorm life. It teaches you how to get along with people. You make lasting friends."

"It makes you have to take care of yourself; you don't have parents breathing down your neck all the time."

For all the grumbling about classes and the heavy academic load, most students think Mid-Pacific is a "good school," even though it is considered "retarded in sports." But when one drives a busload of students on a field trip or to a game, a few will slink down in their seats when passing a group of teenagers on the street: "So shame go MPI," they say, "Don't let 'em see us." This response is due in part to the school's nonathletic image as well as to the impoverished condition of the buses.

The boys' and girls' dormitories are placed at opposite ends of the campus. There are few comfortable places where a couple may get acquainted with any privacy; the students are not allowed to have cars, and the dormitory lounges are inadequate. "Walking up" is a custom which both helps and hinders relationships. If a boy "walks up" a girl to her dorm after dinner, the word is quickly passed around the school; thus even casual meetings are misinterpreted, and a boy thinks twice before "walking someone up." Thus there is relatively little pairing-off at Mid-Pacific.

There are, however, many unique benefits in the Mid-Pacific experience. The campus is large, well-tended and landscaped. The student-teacher ratio is 11 to one; and there is opportunity to get to know one another as persons. The school borders on the University of Hawaii, and many seniors take courses there on early admission. Several vans

are available for the faculty to take students to the beach, on a field trip, or out for 'shave ice' or pizza. Students attend many films, concerts and other cultural activities. Surfing and skindiving are offered as part of the regular physical education program; and class hours are arranged to allow blocks of time for these activities during the school day.

Students form significant peer and faculty relationships which often continue after graduation. A large number of graduates return to visit the campus. Students have the use of the swimming pool, wood shop and other facilities after school and on some evenings and week ends.

THE CLASSROOM

First year teachers often feel a sense of failure in trying to encourage students to "speak up" in class, as they tend to be quiet, polite, even taciturn. But in the dormitory in the evenings, there is plenty of noisy activity. Oriental students are usually quiet around adults in formal academic situations, while being very expressive among themselves. In a large group few will comfortably volunteer. The Oriental response will be discussed more fully below in the section on Japanese Americans.

Teachers learn to handle this problem by recognizing that it is not really a problem but rather a cultural

fact. One can learn to be less aggressive and loud; to break the class into smaller discussion groups, which increases class participation dramatically; and simply to lower one's expectations about what will occur in the larger group setting.

Students show a fairly high level of cooperation, and arrive with homework completed, texts and other materials in hand, and expect to pay attention during the class session. Discipline is rarely a problem.

Students who are not well accepted in the dormitory sometimes experience rebuffs in the classroom as well, in the form of a nearby seat left empty, or by not finding a partner for a group activity, or by being called a joking name or given the classic island "stink eye" by a classmate. Teachers find that a direct approach in dealing with such problems is usually ineffective, as it simply calls more attention to the situation, further isolating the student. Sometimes a word or two after class to the right person in privacy has more effect, and there are ways of helping students to feel more included.

Within a few days after school begins in the fall, students voluntarily take seats as if assigned, working out seating patterns among themselves. Sometimes breaking up cliques for various activities is met with complaining or sighs of resignation. Boys usually sit with boys, girls

with girls. There is some ethnic division, but this tends to break down as the year progresses, and persons come to know each other better.

Nearly all of the ninth graders are living away from home for the first time. When they are asked to write a paper on their first few days at Mid-Pacific, the boys generally write about who they met and what they did; the girls include more feeling-level expressions about their fear of being accepted, uncertainties about a roommate, finding a friend, or the joy of being helped by an older girl.

The following student needs can be recognized by observing the interaction in the classroom and the total life of the school:

- 1) To adjust to boarding school life, including the freedom and responsibility of decision-making.
- 2) To develop a healthy sense of one's own worth.
- 3) To develop satisfying peer relationships.
- 4) To handle sexual feelings in a healthy and satisfying way.
- 5) To develop the ability to concentrate, to read for comprehension, to communicate verbally and non-verbally, and to develop problem-solving skills.
- 6) To experience a sense of meaning for one's future, and to find joy in the present.

Related to these are the three primary goals of the institution, resulting from a school-wide self-study process which involved students, faculty, governing board, parents

and alumni:

- 1) To develop a positive attitude toward learning that will engender an intellectual curiosity and eagerness for life-long learning.
- 2) To develop the skills and abilities to communicate ideas, feelings and information effectively.
- 3) To develop an awareness of the moral and ethical dimension in daily decision making and in personal relationships.

The first two goals were rated either first or second, out of a list of 18, by all groups participating. The third, related to ethics and decision-making, was rated ninth by students and third or fourth by all other groups.

The goal specifically indicating an identification with the Judeo-Christian understanding of life was ranked very near the bottom by students, and below the mid-point by the other groups. Thus it can be surmised that the adults see some worth in a conscious value system (goal number three), but not particularly a Christian orientation. Students apparently see little importance for either, at least in the framework of a survey, developed by adults, on which students know their curriculum will be based.

Mid-Pacific was founded by missionary families a hundred years ago, and continues to require weekly chapel attendance for all students and faculty, and religious training at the ninth grade level. The priorities given to goals, as described above, show the discrepancy between the traditional values and the present sentiment of the school

community. The Board of Managers continues to require chapel and religious training, with a Judeo-Christian emphasis. The school chaplain's task is to implement these programs, but there is broad freedom in how they shall be developed.

Many students consider religious themes to be part of the value system imposed by authority figures; but when life questions are formulated in a manner which relates to them, or when they are helped to verbalize their own religious concerns, they show considerable interest. A large number are involved in their home churches. Some come from Buddhist backgrounds; and another group has little religious training. Many lack a basic knowledge of the Judeo-Christian heritage which is common to western culture.

STUDENTS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY

High school students in Hawaii of Japanese descent share many of the struggles of American students generally.¹ They are interested in finding their identities and in discovering vocational goals. They want to be successful in the adult world. They are working out the question of their sexual identity, and some are beginning to

¹This section is based on a taped interview with David E. Lundsgaard, former teacher and counselor at Mid-Pacific Institute, and more recently a director in the Admissions Office at the University of Hawaii.

experiment. They are undergoing normal physiological changes. Ninth graders tend to be expansive and exuberant, while tenth graders are often more critical and somewhat moody. High school juniors tend to swing out of their moodiness, which then returns to some degree in their senior year, perhaps as they face up to leaving the known world of high school and entering into the unknown.

But there are important differences. Students in Hawaii of Japanese ancestry live in a parochial society, one which has its own language (pidgin) which incorporates many special words and intonations and is a distinctive dialect of English, foreign to mainland speech. Local Hawaiian culture is quite different from the mainstream of continental America. Students have a feeling of being different, but while they live at home in local communities, that distinction is not so apparent. When they come to board at Mid-Pacific however, especially as the haole (Caucasian) enrollment is increasing, they become more aware of the differences. They do not have a very clear understanding of what the social nuances and cultural distinctions really are, and are unsure that they really know the appropriate cultural responses.

Another and perhaps more critical factor is that they are more Japanese American than they are local. Within their own family and culture, obedience to the

group, obeying their parents and other authority figures, and becoming the right kind of person are all highly important values. Many students come from homes in which these values have been confused with being good Americans. A large number of students are sansei and yonsei, third and fourth generation, who come with a sense of loyalty and obligation to their parents and traditional authorities, but also with a newly emerging ethnic identity which tends to reject much of American society and which embraces Oriental culture. Every youth undergoes what has come to be called an identity crisis, and usually the second generation of an ethnic group rejects the values of the first. But the Japanese American is in a unique conflict situation. On the one hand is the guilt aroused by rejecting the values of one's elders, while on the other is the positive American value of rebellion and self-assertion. For Mid-Pacific Japanese, neither the old ways nor the new can be fully and comfortably embraced.

The first generation of Japanese planned to return to their homeland. Their real embrace of American society did not take place until the second generation; but even that generation was not typical of immigrant people, for they still did not reject their heritage. Their respect for elders remained a very important value. Descendants of Japanese immigrants became known to anthropologists as "the

150% men," trying to continue in loyalty to their parents' culture while using that filial sense as a way of becoming good Americans, thus transferring their loyalty to the nation for which they fought in the Second World War. In the process, they never became fully American nor remained really Japanese, but rather 75% of both, not identifying comfortably with either one.

Thus the third and fourth generations not only are struggling to reject some of the Americanized values of their parents, but also are criticizing some of their parents, just at the time when they feel a need to affirm their uniqueness as persons of Oriental ancestry. Many can find no situation, except possibly with a few peers, where they feel fully at home.

Often, whatever synthesis a student manages to develop during high school years at Mid-Pacific is shattered in the experience of going to college on the American mainland. Many return after a year or two and complete their work at the University of Hawaii. The return is often regarded as a personal failure rather than recognized as the broader difficulty of merging with an alien culture, just at the time when their own sense of identity and uniqueness needs to be strongly affirmed.

One example of cultural differences is seen in joking behavior. A student who returned from a mainland

college described American humor as primarily a play on words, a kind of intellectual punning which was foreign to his family and peer group experience. Local Japanese humor, in the business world and among peers, is often a play on sexual ideas and ethnic matters, and in mainland situations, sometimes these forms are not appreciated. At Mid-Pacific, most teachers are Caucasians from the mainland, though some have lived in the islands for several years. Teachers need to be made aware of what these students have found humorous in their own upbringing, and to understand that an intellectualized play on words may not be understood.

Hawaiian society, meaning the local culture in general, is non-intellectual; and the locals are uncomfortable with the intellectual approach that is revered at the private schools. Even in the state legislature there is a hostility toward the university, in part a feeling by local legislators that the campus' intellectualism is foreign to them and not quite to be trusted. There is a need to develop media and techniques on the high school level which are comfortable for these students with an anti-intellectual orientation. At the same time, education is valued highly, and many students will be the first of their families to attend college. Thus, once again, the desire for formal education, which means an embracing of American

culture, is coupled with a fear and distrust of it.

Another area where the two cultures conflict is that of the verbal expression of feelings. Nisei (second generation) have a difficult time in expressing any emotions directly, and sansei and yonsei (third and fourth generation) also feel that anger, in particular, is a bad thing, as are feelings of tenderness and weakness, as well. In their families there is a high value placed on controlling emotions, especially among males; and, as in traditional Japan, there need to be less direct outlets for emotion. Feelings cannot be expressed directly, in confrontation.

Some studies have shown that people tend to be conforming and easy to relate to if their home atmosphere is warm but fairly restrictive. In most homes of Japanese students who attend Mid-Pacific, the parents are "nice people," but firm in their child-rearing. While this pattern tends to reduce creativity and spontaneity in its members, it also produces persons who are congenial and cooperative. This may account for the opinion of teachers that students are unexpressive, which the same teachers interpret as indicative of the students' repressed anger ready to explode. This interpretation may be true to some degree; but it may also mean that these persons are developing a psychic style which is comfortably controlled, not

just painfully repressed, and which is not about to erupt, except in those extreme cases, as with Japanese American mental patients at the state hospital, when a psychic break occurs.

In counseling Mid-Pacific students of Japanese ancestry, one finds that the idea of anger or fighting can only be approached through low-threat styles that can be comfortably tolerated. With some students, one cannot suggest directly that they may feel angry or may have participated in dormitory fights, but can use language like, "You may be bothered," a much less loaded expression. This approach allows the student to come to his or her own conclusion about anger without having the idea imposed from outside. Many will say, "I don't believe in fighting, but discussing." Direct dealing with emotions, either internally or externally, is considered unacceptable in the home; and in those disputes, the parent inevitably dominates. The student then is not free to react or express feelings openly, and often learns the technique of silence, of pulling out of confrontations. Even so, in counseling situations, when an accepting and nonthreatening atmosphere is achieved, students are able to deal with feelings. There may be less direct verbalization about emotions, but the students can be helped to deal with feelings in constructive ways.

Definite negative feelings about haole culture and the business world emerge in these counseling situations; but in a curious way, these feelings do not automatically apply to teachers. From discussions with instructors from other schools, it appears that the teacher is considered a fairly neutral figure, and is, in fact, somewhat of a non-person. If a teacher is able to prove himself or herself as a person, then students usually will accept the teacher as an individual and not primarily as an ethnic type.

Many students of Japanese background are not very assertive in making friends with a teacher, but to persons whose initial overtures are tactful and not too overbearing they respond well. Teachers who make an effort to communicate with students often find that their initiative is met with a warm response. Students have been raised to revere teachers as authority figures, and when someone takes the first step toward them in acceptance and friendship, they are appreciative.

Teachers can find ways, in the classroom, to help students express a wide range of feelings in a comfortable, acceptable manner, through the writing of short papers, by sharing papers with others for discussion in class, by setting up small group situations where feelings can be shared without stress, and by offering students the opportunity to interact with the teacher on a one-to-one basis.

Instructors new to Hawaii, who do not understand the student reluctance to deal directly and publicly with feelings, can be sensitized to the situation. Understanding of the differences in humor can be increased; and it helps to recognize the unique situation of these Japanese Americans who are neither Oriental nor western, but are struggling with both realities.

In the following chapters, a theological framework will be developed in order to suggest approaches for meeting the special needs of island students while offering them the opportunity to grow. The dynamics of an open-ended universe and a responsive God will be explored.

Chapter II

CHRISTIANITY AND PROCESS THOUGHT

As Christianity moved into the Roman and European world, classical theologians explored the Biblical experience of God in the framework of western philosophy. A consequent major emphasis in western thinking has been the nature of reality as objectified by the knower, rather than as the experience of the knower himself or herself.¹ Traditional western education has operated on this basis, as will be considered in Chapter Three.

An alternative approach is to explore the process of the experiences which one has as a subject, and to affirm that all actual entities are processes which, however rudimentary, have their own inner subjectivity. Thus, as expressed in the thought of Alfred North Whitehead and other process thinkers, what is real is the event of prehension.² Unitary actualities take account of each other, usually unconsciously, but sometimes in a complex and advanced fashion known as consciousness. Electrons and molecules may be understood as events which have their own subjectivity without having consciousness. In some way,

¹Schubert M. Ogden, The Reality of God and Other Essays (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

²Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 69.

they take account of events around them. One must keep in mind that "they," the subjects, refers to experiences of prehending, and not to any underlying matter or substance "doing" the prehending.

If what is real is that which is unitary and which, having an inner life of its own, takes account of other subjects, then one may ask whether the universe as a whole is such an entity or event. As suggested in the writings of Charles Hartshorne, a common prehension for many persons consciously--and perhaps for all persons unconsciously--is the unitary nature of all things.³ This is the experience of a unity, a whole, a universe which is not merely a confused jumble of impressions that have no commonality. Hartshorne and Schubert Ogden, among others, argue that this experience of order and unity underlies all meaningful action and experience. It is not an assumption that can be proven in any empirical way, for empirical proofs only point to other empirical events and cannot prove that which lies beyond them and gives them meaning.⁴

The actual unity of the world as a whole is not simply the sum of all prehensions, just as humans are not merely the total of all electrons, molecules and cells

³Charles Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time (La Salle, IL: Open Court Press, 1967), pp. 6-8.

⁴Ogden, p. 15f.

which comprise the "society" we call the human body. Persons experience their own unique subjectivity, which is not merely a collection of all the prehensions that contribute to their own. Less complex events, such as electrons, while part of the complexity of persons, still retain their own subjectivity. Thus human experience transcends that of these lesser subjects.

The biblical affirmation--although these terms are not biblical--of God's transcendence and immanence may be interpreted in a rough analogy with human life, as expressed in the writings of John B. Cobb, Jr.⁵ God may be thought of as that whole which prehends all lesser actualities while itself having its own inner experience. The divine can be understood as immanent, consciously experiencing all events of prehension, from the simplest electron to the most complex mind. God may also be understood as transcendent, with a subjectivity which is more than the multitude of these lesser prehensions.

In this way, the biblical understanding of a God who is intimately involved with human life, who communicates with and responds to persons, can be affirmed. Yet God's "otherness" also can be maintained. The classical assumption of God's perfection, which requires an

⁵John B. Cobb, Jr., God and the World (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 79.

unchanging, static nature, can be set aside in favor of a more accurately biblical view of God's interaction with persons; and God's perfection can be understood as perfect response and interaction, not as static immovability.

The Bible describes a God who calls persons beyond themselves into new experiences. Abraham was led from Ur toward a new land. Moses was called to lead his people out of slavery and, in covenant with God, into a new way of life. The prophets called the Hebrews into a fuller commitment to the covenant relationship with God and with each other, to experience their individual selfhood in relationship to a God who, in his own subjectivity, was known as the supreme Self. Jesus experienced this God as a personal, focused entity, directly responsive to persons; and he proclaimed that all who had "ears to hear" could know that divine presence in their own experience.

Cobb has interpreted this experience as the call forward into increasing openness to the needs of others, a freedom from a too-careful concern for one's own welfare, a deepening of one's understanding of reality, a sense of being loved by God, and the power to act in ways which free and fulfill other people even though it may mean dying for them. God's love also can free persons from the common

idea that individuals, in order to placate the divine reality, have to live in a certain way.⁶

The biblical experience is one of successive calls forward, as persons heed the lure to move beyond where and what they are. The call moves persons to overcome the drag of the past, not simply to repeat in each new moment what they have become in past moments. Novelty is the result of this lure, acting on a world which science calls entropic. The call forward frees the world from stagnation and decay, from winding down instead of tuning up.

This creative process at work in human life will be explored in the concluding pages of this chapter, through the ideas of Henry Nelson Wieman and Alfred North Whitehead. In the next chapter, the thought of these theologians will serve as a framework for a study of contemporary educational issues.

THE SOURCE OF HUMAN GOOD

...there is a creative process working in our midst which transforms the human mind and the world relative to the human mind . . . transformation by this process is always in the direction of greater good.⁷

⁶John B. Cobb, Jr., The Structure of Christian Existence (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), p. 114f.

⁷Henry Nelson Wieman, The Source of Human Good (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1946), p. 17.

Wieman, writing in the 1940's, attempted to explain human growth and the increase of qualitative meaning in terms of a creative process which could be referred to as God. The God he affirmed was not thought of as transcendent, but rather as the creative process which was known through its empirical results in human life. This creative good, or God, produces such created goods as better living conditions, the satisfaction of human needs, the richness of experience, and humanity's control over the course of events.⁸

All of these results in human life are good only insofar as they contribute to greater qualitative meaning:

...that connection between events whereby present happenings enable me to feel not only the quality intrinsic to the events now occurring but also the qualities of many other events that are related to them.⁹

Wieman gives the example of a person hearing footsteps and recognizing them as signalling the presence of a person one has known for many years. The sounds evoke a rich response in the hearer: past experiences are brought into the present through the sign-event of the footsteps and, as the person makes assumptions, expectations and judgements based on the significance of the sounds, the future itself becomes involved. The creative process by

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., p. 18.

which this qualitative meaning occurs is called God, although as the term itself is so loaded with archaic meaning, it sometimes is more problematic than helpful.¹⁰

The creative event--the source of qualitative meaning--always moves in the direction of greater good, transforming the individual into fuller personhood as the richness of experience increases. As the personality integrates a wider range of meanings, it reorganizes experience into larger and more unifying wholes. Thus through the creative process, one increasingly comes to experience the whole meaning of one's life in any given moment. For example, a menial task may take on broad meaning in relationship to one's sense of purpose for all of life; and in any moment one's connection with the whole world may be "qualitatively tasted."¹¹

Wieman understands the creative process as operating in four stages, or sub-events. For the process to result in created good, all stages must occur:

1) One experiences other persons' qualitative meanings, whether in the context of a class presentation, in the reception of insights from family members, or peers, or through literature, etc.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 17.

¹¹Ibid., p. 56f.

2) One integrates these insights with qualitative meaning of one's own. This stage is often a time of separation and quietness as the person struggles toward a new synthesis of meanings.

3) This new synthesis signifies an expansion and enrichment of the person's meaningful experience of the world, which is born in the fruitful interaction between the elements of the first two stages.

4) Finally, through a deepening experience of community, the individual shares this expanded relatedness with other persons who have experienced a similar broadening connection with the world.

With increased community, however, one then becomes aware of how little understanding persons have of one another and of how intent we all are on our own goals, to the exclusion of the goals of others. Thus the fourth stage brings not only a growth of qualitative meaning, but also a growing awareness of alienation.¹²

Qualitative meaning is understood by Wieman as that greater imagination and more profound, discriminating appreciation of the world. It is a created good resulting from the creative good, a process which is called God.¹³

¹²Ibid., pp. 58-65.

¹³Ibid., p. 76.

Qualitative meaning can be mistaken for the process of which it is the product; thus created good can be confused with creative good, pretending to a wholeness of meaning to which it only points. Thus for example, the expansive inclusiveness of nationalism, when the process which produced it is blocked from further development, can then become an idol. Created goods can be perverted into evils which stifle the ongoing creative process.¹⁴

Wieman argues that idolatry is always a threat to the creative process, as the goods produced by it become valued for themselves. Thus, when and if the major problems of humankind as we understand them now--such as disease, hunger, war, etc.--are solved, the greatest evil can yet occur. If the world does not move on to explore fuller qualitative meaning, instead of finding its ultimate glory in what has already been accomplished, the creative process may be blocked.¹⁵

When any created good pretends to a completeness of qualitative meaning, it serves to obscure the source of its goodness. Wieman suggests, "No additive sum of good produced in the past can be any compensation for the blockage of that creativity which is our only hope for the future."¹⁶

¹⁴Ibid., p. 24f.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 80.

CREATIVE PROCESS--A WHITEHEADIAN VIEW

Alfred North Whitehead shares Wieman's conviction that God is that reality which brings forth broader and more complex qualitative meaning, although he uses different terms and begins with a more metaphysical approach.

For Whitehead, to be actual means to be unitary and limited. Limitation occurs in the process of prehension, or the taking account of the complexity of the world and the grading of its many aspects into more or less relevance.¹⁷ An actual occasion is the process of this prioritization in prehensions. It may be at a very rudimentary level, such as the electro-magnetic or cellular, or more complex, such as the personal or the divine. God, the only nontemporal unitary actuality, is limited by goodness. God experiences all other actual occasions, and lures them into fuller, richer prehension of the world.¹⁸

One must recognize here a major distinction between Whitehead and Wieman. Whitehead's concept of God as unitary actuality moves us beyond Wieman's vague "principle of creative good." Principles are abstractions, and have no agency, but unitary actualities do. And while Whitehead writes of God as the "principle of limitation," he makes

¹⁷Alfred North Whitehead, Religion in the Making (New York: New American Library, 1960), p. 144.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 147.

it clear that God is a unitary actuality which embodies that principle.

Whitehead's concepts also help us to understand more fully how the creative event may occur, how new actual occasions are not simply a repetition of previous ones, and are not simply new configurations of past elements or prehensions. The universe is thought of as composed of the actual entities (events of prehension) passing in time, plus the elements which go into the formation of these events. These elements are nontemporal and include creativity, abstract qualities, and God.

First, there is the creativity whereby prehending events transform themselves into new prehensions.

Second, there are abstract qualities, such as color, texture, number, and emotional tones such as hope and fear, etc. Whitehead refers to these abstract qualities variously as ideal entities, forms or eternal objects. They are not actual, in and of themselves, but are uniquely grasped and prioritized in each act of prehension.

Finally, there is God, the actual but nontemporal entity whereby creativity and the ideal forms become con-cresced into actuality.¹⁹

Each event of prehension--each epochal occasion--is thus a microcosm of the whole, as the concrete universe

¹⁹Ibid., p. 87.

(all past actual entities) and the eternal objects (abstract qualities) become combined in a novel fashion.²⁰

Value is the term which describes the self-enjoyment achieved by this prioritization of the universe in a single, limited unique occasion.²¹ At the human level, value may be identified with Wieman's understanding of qualitative meaning. Value may be understood as the enjoyment of being actual.

The creative process is the way in which one epochal occasion participates in the birth of another. The existing world of all previous occasions is the ground for the new occasion, as it is confronted by the ideal forms (or eternal entities) which God presents in such a way as to be graspable, and a new occasion which is called the "novel consequent" occurs. God presents possibilities unique for each epochal occasion and lures it into prehensions which prioritize the elements of the universe and produce a new concrescence of more richness and complexity, value, or qualitative meaning.²² The divine lure is the ground of the aiming process, in which the past is transcended in a new occasion. The grading of the universe in

²⁰Ibid., p. 97f.

²¹Ibid., p. 100f.

²²Ibid., p. 109f.

the act of prehension is the result of what the new occasion chooses to become.

Such a new prehension or epochal event may occur in a fraction of a second. On the other hand, Wieman describes the process from a broader temporal view, indicating the routes of myriad successive occasions joined in a meaningful pattern in his four stages. While the creative process is at work in each epochal occasion and in each succession of occasions known in Wieman's pattern as a substage, the creative good takes on significance for human life only when it "adds up" to something. Only when all of the four stages follow each other does created good emerge in human life.

One may look, however, at a single epochal occasion, as described metaphysically by Whitehead, and ask whether something analogous to Wieman's four subevents occurs within it. The issue is whether Wieman's broad description of how created goods emerge can be applied to the forming of a single unitary actuality or epochal occasion.

While no one-to-one correspondence can be drawn between each stage of Wieman's system and the elements in Whitehead's analysis, certain similarities do appear.

Wieman's first two stages include confrontation and integration of other persons' qualitative meanings with one's own. Whitehead describes the process wherein the

many actual occasions now past are brought into a new unity. The new occasion integrates qualitative achievements of the old, but the past is reshaped and transformed. Thus a person of Asian origin may appropriate elements of his or her tradition, not simply by repeating them in the present, but choosing and prioritizing among them in response to the lure of novelty. Elements of other traditions may be integrated, as the individual moves beyond his or her own origins and chooses a new future, a novel synthesis. God is the actuality which lures persons into novelty through presenting new possibilities in a graspable fashion, appropriate to each individual.

Wieman's third stage, the new synthesis, is like Whitehead's novel consequent. The fourth sub-event in Wieman's system--the deeper participation in a community of shared qualitative meaning--is somewhat like Whitehead's understanding of the movement of the whole process toward greater inclusiveness, as more of the universe becomes more richly prehended.

Because Wieman opts out of metaphysical exploration, however, the two approaches are not fully compatible. For example, because in Wieman's thought the idea of unitary actuality is not applied to God, his first two stages deal with human qualitative meanings and leave no room for God's presentation of the ideal or the lure, except in the

vague sense of "creative good." While Wieman seems to assign agency to the creative process, his four substages are described in such a way as to suggest that the agency is really human. Whitehead, on the other hand, attempts to show how in the creative process the human and divine interact, and how the human dimension is part of a process operating at prehuman levels as well.

The following chapter deals with two contemporary educational approaches, which are analyzed in light of the process philosophies of Whitehead and Wieman. The justification for such an interrelationship is the conviction that education should serve to open persons to the creative process.

Chapter III

PROCESS THEISM AND EDUCATION

The preceding chapter began with the assertion that traditional Christian theology explored the reality of God in the static categories of western philosophy. Then an alternative approach in the form of process theology was offered, in which God may be understood as the supreme subject, luring all unitary actualities into fuller qualitative experience. In traditional western education a static view of reality can be noted, similar to traditional theology, and resulting in an understanding of learning as incultation. Persons were to be given certain truths, facts, and values, and tests were designed to determine--often very ineffectively--whether the information had been transmitted and retained, and whether it could be applied to new situations.

Such an approach to education can be contrasted with contemporary patterns, based on an "open classroom" style. There is growing recognition that it is when a subject (a person) is actively engaged in the educational process, reaching out for experience, rather than being passively receptive, then real learning occurs. It is not correct to say that traditional educators were unaware of this fact, or that only contemporary education has

discovered it.

The problem with some popularized notions of contemporary education is that both the call forward and the tendency toward inertia are not held together in tension. The idea, as commonly expressed, is that students need to be self-motivated and that teachers, classrooms and educational systems are to be used at the students' initiation. Thus if they choose not to learn to read, for example, there is no pressure placed on that area of study. When a student is ready, it is assumed, he or she will learn in due time. There is enough partial truth underlying this idea that it can easily be misunderstood as the whole truth; but education should be better understood as lure.

In the following sections of this chapter, two contemporary educational themes will be explored in the light of process theology. Robert F. Mager's understanding of behavioral goals and objectives, and Sidney Simon and others' development of values clarification will be considered.

BEHAVIORAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

More than a decade ago, Robert F. Mager applied the idea of measurable objectives to the process of education, asserting that until a specific outcome becomes

identified, one could not decide how to reach it.¹ An objective is thus "an intent communicated by a statement describing a proposed change in a learner--of what the learner is to be like when he has successfully completed a learning experience."² It describes a pattern of behavior or a performance which the learner is to demonstrate; and it is a measurable, observable activity.³ "Terminal objectives" are those which identify the behavior which a student performs at the end of an instructional program, "at the time your influence over him (sic) ends."⁴

In writing objectives, one usually must include the conditions under which the activity will be performed: whether a testing situation will allow the use of notes, how much time will be allowed, etc. Also, the criteria of acceptable performance usually are stated in the objective--the standards by which the behavior is to be evaluated, such as the percentage of correct answers, the distance to be run in a certain range of time, etc.⁵

¹Robert F. Mager, Preparing Instructional Objectives (Palo Alto, CA: Fearon, 1962), p. 2.

²Ibid., p. 3.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 2.

⁵Ibid., p. 3f.

The objectives describe what a person should be doing. In writing objectives, one needs to select those verbs which are least ambiguous and most measurable. Thus "to write" is a more observable activity than "to know."⁶ Examples of behavioral objectives at various grade levels might include:

The student will be able to tell, within three seconds, whether a geometric object is red, yellow or blue when the teacher asks, "Is this (pointing to an object) red, yellow or blue?"

The learner will be able to arrange, in writing, eight given samples of metal according to their positions in the periodic table, beginning with the lowest, within one minute.

The student will read aloud a page, of the instructor's choosing, from Little House on the Prairie, with no more than four word-identification errors, within a period of three minutes.

The student will be able, without using notes, to write a two-page essay on an Egyptian pharaoh of the student's choosing, describing the period of the pharaoh's reign, his major accomplishments, the primary deities worshipped, and the political relationship with Palestine. Forty-five minutes will be given.

Objectives serve as a guide to the instructor as well as the student and offer a means of measuring an educational system on the basis of performance. However, criticism has arisen over the fact that the easiest objectives to compose are those which require from the student

⁶Ibid., p. 11.

the least creativity and freedom of expression. The examples given above point to various cognitive functions: color recognition, the ordering of metal samples, reading skills, and the clear presentation of written information. Mager's response to the criticism that such objectives stifle creativity is to say that without a measurable, observable behavior, there is no way to determine how well a system functions.

In a more recent book, Mager deals with the analysis of goals, which are broader statements of intent for an instructional program. Goals indicate the concrete objectives described in the preceding paragraphs. The objectives point to the more specific behavior by which the goals are achieved. The goal for a religion course might be "An openness in the student to the possibility of a personal religious experience." Such a goal Mager would label as "fuzzy," as it is abstract and does not point to observable behavior. The teacher must ask, "How will I know when such a goal is reached?" Mager suggests a process through which one explores the performance indicators, and suggests a method of refining the wording of a goal so that it points to a measurable activity.⁷

⁷Robert F. Mager, Goal Analysis (Belmont, CA: Fearon, 1972), pp. 35, 72.

A goal for a music program might be that "the student should come to like music." One might ask what are the indicators which would objectively indicate that the goal had been attained. Various behavior might so indicate: the student elects to take an unrequired music course, the student practices more than is required, the student is cooperative in class. If one discovers that the indicators are too abstract, then further refining is needed. "The student is cooperative in class" must then be replaced with descriptions of action which indicate cooperation, such as paying attention during lectures, etc. If "paying attention" is still too vague, then specific attending behavior should be indicated, such as: "makes eye contact with instructor" or "takes notes during lectures," or negative statements such as "does not talk to others during lectures."⁸ The instructor must determine what combination of behavior will constitute a successful attainment of the goal.

Mager maintains that teachers have no other way of making judgments about the inner attitudes of their students, except on the basis of the overt signals they give. Thus behavioral goals and objectives are believed to be essential in determining how an educational program is functioning.

⁸Ibid., p. 63f.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES CRITIQUED

Wieman, however, states as a major tenet that one cannot predetermine the outcome of the creative process, for its very nature includes the transformation of the original goals of the persons who participate in the process:

One cannot follow predicted satisfaction of interest as a guide because interests undergo an unpredictable transformation when one meets the conditions and follows the⁹ procedures necessary to seek their fulfillment.

Rather, when we take the satisfaction of our present untransformed wants as our guide, we move into the jaws of evil and away from good in terms of satisfaction itself.¹⁰

We may compare Wieman's four-stage creative process with Mager's approach:

<u>Wieman</u>	<u>Mager</u>
1) Person experiences the qualitative meanings of others.	1) Student receives behavioral objectives from instructor.
2) The qualitative meanings of others and of oneself are held in confrontation.	2) Student works to modify behavior to fit objectives.
3) The qualitative meanings of others are merged in a unique and unpredictable synthesis.	3) Student demonstrates new behavior.

⁹Henry Nelson Wieman, The Source of Human Good (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1946), p. 12.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 13.

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|--|--|
| 4) Person enters into a community where synthesis can be shared. | 4) Student is categorized with those who have demonstrated behavior. |
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Obviously, Mager's system has been arranged on the basis of Wieman's pattern; but the comparison points to the fact that in Mager's understanding of the decision-making process, the student is secondary. The instructor's objectives are imposed from outside. The creative process, as understood by Wieman and as corroborated by Whitehead, centers in the interaction of the individual with the lure, not the fulfilment of requirements which have been externally imposed.

Whitehead has stated, however, that a teacher must have a clear understanding of what students should learn, and should eliminate the irrelevant materials.¹¹ Thus, goals and objectives can assist in systematizing the instructor's understanding; but Whitehead also suggests that the student's mind is "a growing organism, and not a box to be filled." Whitehead understands education to be "the art of the utilization of knowledge,"¹² not just the reception of "inert ideas,"¹³ and holds that;

In education, as elsewhere, the broad primrose path leads to a nasty place. This evil

¹¹Alfred North Whitehead, The Aims of Education (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 36.

¹²Ibid., p. 4.

¹³Ibid., p. 1.

path is represented by a book or a set of lectures which will practically enable the student to learn by heart all the questions likely to be asked at the next external examination.¹⁴

Thus the idea of behavioral objectives which define what content must be known for a test, itself stifles the creative process.

It is assumed that Whitehead's comments on education stem from his understanding of the nature of reality as the interaction of the ground with the ideals presented by God, and the forming of a novel consequent, unique in each occasion and not predetermined.

If God is understood as the unitary actuality which presents unique possibilities to each epochal occasion, then the ideal possibility may be understood as the goal, not projected ahead by the prehending event, but experienced from ahead. As with John Dewey the tendency in many educators (including Mager) is to assume that the human organism creates its own ideals, its own leap into the future;¹⁵ but as Whitehead has shown, there must be a unitary actuality acting upon the world to draw it forward.

Goals and objectives as systematized by educators may be understood as their response to the "Call Forward," as God's lure is described in the writings of John B. Cobb,

¹⁴Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁵John B. Cobb, Jr., God and the World (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 50.

Jr. They represent the teacher's participation in the creative process as the clarification of one's educational approach; but as with any created goods, they can become absolutized and can "obstruct the growth of new goods which at that point he cannot foresee or understand."¹⁶

Mager fails to recognize the nature of the creative process when he suggests, "...neither does a composer orchestrate a score until he knows what effects he wishes to achieve."¹⁷ For while the composer may have a definite direction in mind, the score's final form (the created good) cannot be foreseen, but must emerge in the process.

One may trust that the creative process is at work in all human life, and can understand that all objectives are in need of continual revision and, when the process moves in other directions should be set aside. Teachers must be open to the process at work in their classrooms, and must be prepared to make mid-course corrections along the way. The predetermination of the outcome in the form of behavioral objectives, by not allowing for the transformation of the goals themselves in the process, can effectively stifle the creative good. Predetermined objectives imposed by the instructor, instead of quickening the

¹⁶Cobb, God and the World, p. 51, commenting on Wieman.

¹⁷Mager, Preparing Instructional Objectives, p. 3.

interest of the student, may serve rather to deaden it.

As Whitehead suggests, "self development is the key."¹⁸ He says that "The principle of progress is within; discipline is self-discipline." The teacher should elicit enthusiasm by the stimulation of his or her own personal enthusiasm and caring.¹⁹

VALUES CLARIFICATION

Another contemporary educational theme relates to the clarification and prioritizing of values, which have been systematized in a book entitled Values and Teaching and further developed by Sidney Simon and others. They are interested in finding more creative ways of dealing with the question of values within the framework of education.²⁰

In traditional approaches, teachers have tried to inculcate their own value systems through moralistic lecturing or by setting a good example. Some others have given up and adopted a laissez-faire attitude, leaving students to decide on priorities for themselves.²¹ Some

¹⁸Alfred N. Whitehead, p. 1.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 39.

²⁰Louis Rath, Merrill Harmin, and Sidney Simon, Values and Teaching (Columbus: Merrill, 1966).

²¹Sidney B. Simon, Leland W. Howe, and Howard Kirchenbaum, Values Clarification (New York: Hart, 1972), p. 15-18.

teachers, however, have attempted to offer their students certain ways in which values could be more clearly recognized and prioritized; and this last approach is the basis for the values clarification process.

A value may be defined as an attitude held at the very center of a person's existence, uniquely one's own. It affects behavior, shapes ideas and conditions feelings.²²

A value may be considered to be the relationship of the self as it relates to other persons in the environment, through the feelings, ideas, behavior, and intellect of the individual, in such a way as to enhance that person's creative growth.²³

Three aspects or stages of the valuation process are divided into sub-events:²⁴

PRIZING one's beliefs and behaviors:

1. Prizing and cherishing
2. Publicly affirming, when appropriate

CHOOSING one's beliefs and behaviors:

3. Choosing from alternatives
4. Choosing after consideration of consequences

²²Brian P. Hall and Maury Smith, Value Clarification as Learning Process (New York: Paulist Press, 1973), p. 95.

²³Ibid., p. 27.

²⁴Simon, p. 19.

5. Choosing freely

ACTING on one's beliefs:

6. Acting

7. Acting with a pattern, consistency and repetition.

Only when one's beliefs have been repeatedly acted on can a true or full value be understood to be functioning. Sometimes the choosing process is listed before the prizing function, which seems a somewhat more accurate description of the way values actually develop.

A major way to implement values clarification is through a ranking process, where personal priorities can be clarified, followed by a recognition of how one's actions compare with them.²⁵ To encourage such a process in the classroom, an atmosphere of trust, respect and affirmation is essential. And it is important for the teacher to have analyzed his or her own value priorities and then to continue the process along with the students.²⁶

Some examples of value clarification strategies include the following:

1) The Alligator River Story: The instructor tells a story in which the characters respond to a crisis situation in a variety of ways; and the student then is

²⁵Hall, p. 97.

²⁶Ibid., p. 100f.

invited to decide which character acts most appropriately, and to rank the others in order of preference. Then the student responses may be the basis for a small group discussion leading to the question of why certain behavior was affirmed or rejected.

2) Value-Ranking Strategies: A series of forced-choice questions which help students to recognize their priorities, questions such as:

A. You are well-off financially and you inherit \$10,000. What will you do?

- _____ put it in the bank
- _____ invest in the stock market
- _____ spend it all
- _____ give it to those in need

B. What is most important?

- _____ to work hard for your future
- _____ to love others
- _____ to really know oneself

3) Values Continuum: in which one places his or value position along a line between two extremes:

A. What should be the U. S. attitude in foreign relations?

Help every country, even : if not asked	:	:	:	:	Help no coun- try; complete isolationism
---	---	---	---	---	--

B. How are you at decision making?

Totally un-						Lightning-fast
able to make						decisions about
decisions,	:	:	:	:	:	everything
even about						
what to wear						

There are many other strategies that have been devised in recent years, including the use of photographs or objects for sorting according to one's priorities in a certain field of interest, or the use of simulation games, etc.

An important element in the values clarification pattern is that the basic appeal is made to the ego, not to the superego, as in the older moralizing approaches. The emphasis is on free decision-making, not the imposition of a foreign set of values.²⁷

Materials developed by the Paulist press affirm this underlying theological position:

Value clarification is a method that states: "We believe in the sacredness of human life." We are created by a good God who believes in us.

We believe theologically that the incarnation and resurrection of our Lord are more powerful than the demonic. Therefore, if people would clarify what they live, they will discover the Word of God rather than that of Lucifer.²⁸

The assumption seems to be that the process itself

²⁷Ibid., p. 117.

²⁸Ibid., p. 32.

is beneficial and that values need not be imposed, because goodness is stronger than evil. When persons are helped to make clear-headed decisions they will choose the right, not because an outside authority tells them what to choose, but presumably because the power of Good has been at work.

While there seems to be some connection between this view and the Whiteheadian idea of a creative good, or God, at work luring the world through goodness, one must look carefully and critically at the assumptions.

Wieman, writing in the 1940's before the present approach was systematically developed, made the following comments:

...allowing each individual to decide what is good and what is evil for him is, in truth, diabolical...human good can be increased only by progressive accumulation of good through a sequence of generations (or) the past can no longer provide building-stones for the present,²⁹ and history becomes an evil and not a resource.

Wieman continues by suggesting that persons are inextricably linked to past and future; and when they make judgements in isolation, they fail to recognize how affected they are by the past and how decisions change the future, not only of their own lives but of the wider world.³⁰ And recalling Wieman's four substages in the creative process (see page 25 above), one notes that

²⁹Wieman, p. 11.

³⁰Ibid.

creativity occurs in the interaction between other persons' qualitative meanings and one's own. There has been considerable development of small group processes in relation to values education, which follows Wieman's understanding; but there is still an implicit assumption that the important feature is self-discovery, and not necessarily the struggle with the values of significant adults of the past or present. There is a chance then that values clarification could result in very little prehension of the call forward.

In another article, however, Wieman has stated that education cannot inculcate values, but rather can give the tools so that persons may develop their own values.³¹ Through the very process of helping persons to clarify their own values, certain other values are being communicated--the importance of self-understanding and of self-motivation, the need to struggle with ethical questions, and the idea that life is not based on a set of dictated rules, but is a process and a becoming.

Whitehead suggests that "The purpose of God is the attainment of value in the temporal world," and states that value is inherent in being actual, in having self-interest. Thus, to use Wieman's phrase, value is the qualitative meaning of an individual and is the prioritization of the

³¹Henry Nelson Wieman, Seeking a Faith for a New Age (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1975), p. 117f.

universe in the act of prehending it.³² God's purpose is to increase the complexity and depth of the prehensions of epochal occasions. Values clarification can serve this process when strategies are developed to allow for all four of the sub-stages suggested by Wieman: the experiencing of other persons' qualitative meanings, the integration with one's own, the resulting synthesis of expanded meanings, and the sharing of qualitative meanings in the community of other persons.

If education can be understood as an intentional process of opening oneself and others to experience the lure of novel possibilities, then value education must offer a challenge to personal priorities as well as a clarification of them. There may be an inherent challenge simply in the process of clarification; but Christian education must include the confrontation with the lure to unselfseeking openness to others' need, as suggested in Chapter Two.

In the next chapter, the theological and educational themes of the preceding pages will be utilized as the framework for teaching methods used in the World Civilization course for ninth graders at Mid-Pacific Institute.

³²Alfred North Whitehead, Religion in the Making (New York: New American Library, 1960), p. 97.

Chapter IV

THE MID-PACIFIC CLASSROOM AND PROCESS CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

In the opening chapters, the needs of students at Mid-Pacific were presented, including:

- 1) Adjustment to the freedom and responsibility of boarding school life.
- 2) Development of self-esteem.
- 3) Development of satisfying peer relations.
- 4) Healthy and satisfying acceptance of one's sexuality.
- 5) Development of academic skills, including concentration, reading for comprehension, communication and problem-solving skills.
- 6) Experiencing a sense of meaning for one's future and of joy in the present.

Specific problems related to Mid-Pacific students include several which are directly related to the school's ethnic and cultural diversity:

- 1) Language problems between local and foreign students, and between the pidgin English of local students and the standard English expected by the faculty and administration.
- 2) Oriental reticence to express feelings, which is in some tension with a more overt western style.

3) The conflict, among Japanese students in particular, between their desire for educational advancement and their distrust of the intellectual approach, including different styles of humor.

4) The tension among Japanese students between their need for self-affirmation, expressed through rebellion, and their desire to please authority figures.

5) The reluctance to speak out in large group situations, yet a willingness to discuss in small groups.

6) The problem of the few who do not manage to find acceptance, either in the dormitory or the classroom, most often seen in foreign or Caucasian students.

7) The lack of a casual and relaxed development of dating patterns.

9) The problem of students seeing teachers in rigid role stereotypes rather than as persons, and the need for teachers to initiate more personal relationships with students.

9) The varied religious backgrounds of students and their resistance to formal worship, while being willing to deal with those religious issues which connect with their own situation.

Most of the needs and problems of students may be understood as part of the broad concerns of personal self-acceptance and the ability to function within the social

setting of the school. The primary goals of the institution--a positive attitude toward life-long learning, the development of communications skills, and the development of moral and ethical awareness--can be related to these needs and problems.

Self-esteem is the key. As students come to a healthy self-acceptance, they are likely to be more eager to explore the world, are able to communicate more effectively, and can be more open to the needs of others. In the reverse, it is learning and interaction that can increase self-esteem; and communications skills assist the process. And through involvement with ethical and moral questions, one may experience one's own worth as an individual affirmed by God and by other persons, as is recognized by the Christian understanding of reality.

The chapters related to process theology and education explored the relation of the individual to God, to the world and to other persons. The drag of the past and the lure into new possibilities for expanded experiences of reality were shown in tension. In Wieman's understanding of the creative process there was a recognition that personal qualitative meanings expand and deepen in confrontation with those of others, that the historically developed insights of humanity can be set aside only with great peril, and that as one emerges into a new synthesis of

expanded meaning, there must be a sharing with other persons in community.

It was shown that the goals and objectives approach may actually stifle creative growth if there is not a recognition that in the process of attempting to reach the goals--such as the ones articulated by the school--the outcomes are changed from the original intent. Yet the goal-setting process is an aid to clarity of direction, and it assists in opening persons to the creative process when the goals can be reviewed and changed along the way. It also was concluded that the values clarification approach helps persons to recognize their priorities. When coupled with a sharing of the qualitative meaning of significant historical persons who have struggled with important issues, the creative process is more fully operative. In the chapter on Christianity and process thought, the development of self-transcendence and a broadened concern for the world in unselfseeking love was recognized as inherent in the life of Jesus. This experience was further explored and prized by the community which followed him and which continues in the present era.

The creative actuality described in Cobb's process language as the 'call forward,' and which is seen in the life of Christ, can be served in the classroom through a careful, critical use of behavioral goals and objectives

and through the process of values clarification.

Mid-Pacific Institute may be understood in the framework of the tension between the drag of the past and the lure to growth and novelty. Students are thrust into a boarding school environment with persons of varied ethnic backgrounds; and it is little wonder, when so much of life is suddenly new, that they seek comfort by remaining in the familiar patterns of their own group. Persons tend to function in this way, even when their new environment is more continuous with their past. It is understandable why students feel distrustful of intellectualism at the very moment when they seek a "good education," for the intellectual realm confronts them in a language different from that of their home and peer group. The academic world is somewhat suspect even among adults of their own ethnic group, as discussed in the section on Japanese Americans. It is easy to understand, also, why some students remain outsiders, as scapegoats fitting in nowhere among those others who also are struggling with their identity. Some students are even rejected by members of their own ethnic group who do not want to be tagged by association. One can also see why Christianity, the religion of western civilization, is often understood as an imposition from outside, rather than as the lure to self-acceptance and growth.

Further, one may sympathize with those who find it too risky to move into relationships with the opposite sex, in speaking out in class, or in sharing feelings. All of these situations pose the risk of failure in a world where many young people already feel threatened. Also, in each of these risks, the students' cultural traditions counsel against an overly aggressive behavior, and an open expression of emotion, and they affirm the higher value of one's own ethnic heritage.

Ways must be developed so that the major goals of the school--life-long learning, communication skills, and ethical openness to the future of others--can be lures to lead persons beyond the drags of the past. The school's goals must articulate the growth process which can liberate youth to experience life more richly and broadly. The classroom can be a situation where this process is prized and encouraged, where persons can experience themselves as accepted, as they are called forward.

Whitehead recognized three stages in the learning process. First is the period of romance, as one experiences novel ideas and facts. Systematic rigorous study is not yet the appropriate pattern. Rather, one is encouraged to explore the world in wonderment, and is allowed to explore where one will. Next is the stage of precision, as the student engages in disciplined study in a particular

area. It is a time of grammar, of learning to think systematically, of integrating facts, experiences and ideas in an orderly and critical fashion. Finally there is the stage of generalization, in which a subject has been mastered in enough systematic detail so that one is free from minutiae, and can return to the experience of wonder and romance, and of seeing patterns and relations. Now one is armed with enough ordered knowledge of a field to push beyond into new frontiers of exploration.³²

Basing his understanding on British schools early in this century, Whitehead suggested that the ages from 12 to 15 should be the stage of precision in language, while science and history should still be in a period of romance.³³ Because the Mid-Pacific students come from such a wide background of ethnic origins and educational experiences, for them no such neat generalizations can be made. For some students, the ninth grade level is a time of first exposure to the basic facts and ideas of early civilization and the major religious traditions of the world. For others, it can be a time of more systematic probing. Some students are still struggling to write a grammatical sentence; while others have writing and reading skills which

³²Alfred North Whitehead, The Aims of Education (New York: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 15-22.

³³Ibid., p. 23f.

allow them to develop a clear and well organized term paper of some length.

Often these differences among students are taken as indicators of their native ability, without considering their differences in background. The classroom program must be individualized to meet these students where they are academically, and premature judgements of their ability to do top academic work must be avoided. Students must be reached at whatever stage they are--romance, precision, or generalization. Thus for one student, the immediate task could be reading a book or article for its sequence of events or ideas. For another, the challenge is to read more critically, comparing one work with others and exploring the frame of reference of the writer and the underlying ideas that are expressed. One must be careful, however, even with these judgements. Some students who seem only able to read for simple content very quickly may learn to read with critical insight. The classroom process must allow for that very novelty which is the result of the call forward.

The instructor must help each student approach the material in a meaningful way, while yet calling for each one to move into further growth. Wieman's understanding of the stages of the creative process apply here. New qualitative meanings are encountered in relation to one's own

and a new synthesis is reached which draws one into fuller community with others.

The above analysis may be exemplified through an academic unit for ninth grade students based on a reading of The Lord of the Flies by William Golding. This book has been selected for many reasons. The ninth grade course, which is the concern of this dissertation project, begins with a study of early humanity before the development of the major river valley civilizations. Paleolithic, mesolithic and neolithic periods are briefly explored, and the experience of the early Hebrews is studied. Various themes are included: aggression, the experience of the holy, tribal tabus and organization, the emergence of myth and ritual, and the beginnings of ethical and moral awareness. Golding's story of a group of English boys, left to themselves on a tropical island, offers many points of contact. Some students have to struggle to read the book, identify the main characters, and outline the sequence of events. Others read the story in a few days and can recount it easily and with good understanding. Some students make quick connections with the themes stated above, recognizing modern similarities with early humanity, while others are able to note the distinctions between pre-civilized groups and the modern children in the story who must make their own decisions about matters of life and death.

Thus the instructor cannot make one set of objectives for all students, but must help each to respond to the material in a way which is appropriate for that individual. For one youth, a day's assignment might be to read a chapter and write a paragraph about the major events and characters. For another student, the instructor might raise a critical question to consider while reading the material. The question might be related to the school situation, such as a comparison of dormitory events with those in the book; while for another student, the question might be related to a passage in the Pentateuch, the Koran, or a Buddhist text.

In the classroom, the student would be responsible for choosing among a number of activities. One may wish to listen to a taped reading of particular pages of the text as an aid to comprehension. Another might use pictures taken from magazines and develop a visual presentation of some theme taken from the book. Some may choose to work in small groups, exploring an issue such as two characters' different styles of leadership and why one is able to gain more of a following. Others may wish to develop a dramatic presentation related to the material. Some may work in pairs, some alone. A system of checks can be devised so that the instructor has a method of evaluating the involvement and effort of each student. The teacher is out among

the students during the period they are at work. The instructor listens, encourages, makes suggestions, and evaluates what is taking place.

The next session might be centered around an engagement of the whole class together in the same activity, such as a values clarification experience related to the material in the book. Students might be divided into small groups and be asked to respond to a series of questions posed by the instructor, answering individually on paper. They might be asked to rank the major characters according to the similarities with themselves. Later they might share their decisions with the small group and explore their answers together. Students might be asked to decide which character they would choose for a class officer or dormitory leader, and to discuss their reasons with each other.

After the book has been the basis of several class sessions, students may be helped to develop their own personal objectives, leading to some final project for this segment of the course. In this way the goals and objectives approach can be introduced as a means for each individual to develop his or her own value choices, rather than having them imposed from outside. One must keep in mind that in the process of attaining the objectives, they may become changed.

The instructor might offer a class hour in which students write down what they would like to do with the material, and develop objectives related to their choice. One student might decide to write a character study of a particular person in the story. Another might write an editorial for the school newspaper, discussing some theme explored in the class sessions. Someone else might draw a series of pictures representing certain events or themes inspired by the story. Another student might interview a policeman hired to be on duty at a school dance, asking about the officer's perceptions of how youth act in groups. Some students may wish the option of being tested on the major events and themes. An individual might compare an event in the life of Jesus with an incident in the story. Others might deal with sections of Conrad Lorenz' On Aggression and compare them with materials in Lord of the Flies. One might even describe a fight in the dormitory in the light of the class discussions related to Golding's novel.

The instructor would discuss ideas with the students during the class session, and ask for a written proposal from each one. The teacher's role would be that of an enabler, offering suggestions, commenting on ideas, and helping each student to choose a project which is appropriate and meaningful. The instructor then would check with

students during the following class periods to see how they are progressing.

Such individualization of work, while centering around a common text, allows for individual choices yet keeps the whole class working in the same thematic area. This approach offers the opportunity for students to interact based on their common experiences, while yet allowing each one to work at his or her own level.

More effort is required of the instructor in such a pattern, as there is no standardized method of evaluation and as each student must be helped to develop his or her own program. The teacher must trust the process and must work out ways of checking with individuals, holding them accountable while offering them considerable freedom of choice. Some students will work independently and require only occasional encouragement and evaluation. Others will have difficulty making any decisions at all, and will need constant help even to complete the basic reading. Some students will recognize this classroom pattern as their opportunity to avoid much real effort, developing a project which may seem significant but which is not genuinely challenging. The instructor must keep alert to help each student respond to the call forward. Such a task is always only partially successful; but the instructor must trust the creative process, while encouraging it as much as

possible.

How shall one determine grades in such a system? Shall the student who struggles valiantly with the reading of the book, still working for simple comprehension, be given the same grade as one who, with no more effort, masters the story line easily and even struggles with an important theme? Each one has pushed beyond the previous levels of attainment. Or should the "good student" be penalized for being farther along in Whitehead's stages of education?

There is no simple answer. The school requires grades, has an honor roll, and places students in class rank. The grading procedure is important for college admission; and the students themselves want to be evaluated. They know when they have received an "easy grade." They know who among them is able to think more critically and who is still struggling to read for comprehension. It is this writer's conviction that the ability to think critically is to be prized and graded more highly than the ability to read for mere story-line understanding.

Students need to experience themselves as valid persons, however, whether working hard and receiving an average grade or getting top scores. They need to develop a realistic understanding of themselves while being open to their own change and growth.

The instructor must make clear his or her own values, and discuss the way in which the students will be graded, while continuing to interact in a value clarification and modification process with the students themselves.

The use of student-written goals and objectives, individualized instruction, the values clarification approach, a small group setting, and a variety of testing and evaluation methods seem to this writer to offer the best ways of dealing with the needs of students which were outlined in the opening pages of this chapter. The primary need was understood as the development of a healthy self-esteem which can encourage each person to move forward in response to the call. The approaches suggested here allow each student the opportunity to respond out of his or her own present situation, while getting students more involved with each other and with the materials and ideas the instructor chooses. Thus Wieman's four stages all are included.

Persons of differing ethnic backgrounds have the opportunity to make contact with each other around a given set of materials, in which the right answers are less important than the exploration of feelings and ideas. Students who wish to work alone can have that option for part of their time, while being called on at other times to share in small groups.

Another unit of the course involves the study of one's own ethnic heritage; it concludes with the writing of an autobiographical paper which explores how the individual is part of a unique ethnic tradition. Students who begin by saying they "don't have anything interesting to write about" or that "Nothing important has happened to me" often end up making exciting discoveries about themselves and their ancestry.

Japanese students may interview a grandparent for the first time, struggling to understand the broken English of a grandmother who worked in the sugar cane or pineapple fields as a contract laborer, put four children through mainland colleges, and ended up managing a grocery store in Kona or rural Oahu. Many students bring in passports from the turn of the century, or photographs from 1927 showing the family gas station in Punaluu or Kaimuki. Some write haiku or other poetry about childhood incidents, or retell their father's experience on the day that Pearl Harbor was attacked. Students of Hawaiian lineage may discover their ancestral names in records at the Bishop Museum, explore Hawaiian myths, bring in feather leis, or make longrice or poi to share with the class. Mainland haoles research their family's immigration from Germany, or the Civil War hero on their mother's side, or the family's experience in the time of the Depression. A girl from the

Marshall Islands may dance or tell a family legend. A Chinese boy schedules a class field trip to a temple in Nuuanu Valley, pointing out the wooden tablets inscribed with the names of his great-grandparents.

No student is required to make a class presentation or to make a contribution beyond the written report, but many take the opportunity to share from their discoveries about their own lives and their family heritage. This portion of the course is usually the high point of the year. Each student is an authority, the best in the world, on her or his own life. The ethnic mixture at Mid-Pacific then becomes a rich and pleasurable experience rather than a separating force. A shy student may be more willing to make a verbal presentation when the subject is familiar and when the class is seated informally on the floor sampling some exotic dish. Another may wordlessly place a series of sketches of Filipino village life on the bulletin board.

Occasionally a person who makes a presentation is greeted with snickering or other discourteous responses. There is no way to force a class into courtesy and caring. But the unit does result in an increased enjoyment of differences, and often persons emerge more fully as a part of the group than before. As racial stereotypes and attitudes are explored and challenged, the unit offers the

opportunity for further significant values clarification.

The involvement with one's own past and the experience of others' life stories has proven to be a creative process involving many of the themes presented in previous sections of this project. The four-fold creative process can be seen at work as students, through the discovery of their own heritage and through consciously exploring their own experiences, expand their own qualitative meaning. They also interact with other students, learning much about each others' lives and ethnic backgrounds. Through readings and interviews related to their exploration, they are opened to new insights beyond those of themselves and their peer group. The finished project--a 15- to 20-page paper--gives them training in the communication skills valued as part of the school's primary goals. But because of their personal involvement, the work is not simply an academic exercise. The "created good" of the finished project is only the tangible formulation of the creative process which has been at work throughout the experience.

The project offers a way for students to deal with some of the needs described above, above all the need to develop self-esteem. It helps students to affirm themselves while growing in openness to the lives of others. The Christian understanding of love as an unselfseeking concern for the future of other persons can grow out of

such experiences. With awareness of other persons' unique and interesting pasts, one is better able to transcend one's own life and to affirm other persons as valuable. The "moral and ethical dimension," as suggested in the school's third goal, is served in this way. Through values clarification, students can be helped to see how they usually respond to the needs of others. This approach may be linked with Biblical studies, which expose them to an historic experience of love which has moved so many other persons beyond their own self-interest. The writing of the autobiography can be a way of introducing the idea that each person in the whole of humanity has an interesting and significant life history and cherishes hopes for the future as a growing and productive individual.

The global hunger crisis and the need for justice and ecological responsibility can be introduced at this advanced personal level. The causes of hunger, poverty and injustice can be introduced in this context. The legacies of colonialism, the fact of war, the functioning of trans-national corporations and other factors can be explored in the light of what they mean in the lives of individual persons.

Because so many of the students discover that their own families have lived at one time in conditions of poverty and oppression, there is a possibility to personalize

the present situation in much of the world. Because this educational experience centers in student self-discovery, the exploration of global human need can be conducted in a way that is not simply an imposition of moral imperatives from the instructor. The teacher's role should be that of luring students into an expansion of their qualitative meaning so as to include an unselfseeking concern for the global community.

In this unit as in all others, the instructor's own life-style is an essential element. The continuing experience of prayer, and the fellowship with others who open themselves consciously to the call forward are important aspects in the life of a Christian educator.

THE PLACE OF PRAYER IN PREPARATION

The unitary actuality experienced in some dim fashion by those who sense the oneness of the universe may be understood as fully aware of every lesser actuality. God shares in the conscious and unconscious experience of every person, as well as in the life of all other unitary actualities. The Christian faith also affirms that persons can experience God in turn, as witnessed in the life of Jesus and in the lives of many individuals throughout history. Prayer is often the context in which this experience occurs, as the person seeks to be open to the divine

reality.

Whitehead suggests that there are three common stages in an individual's relationship with the divine: first a sense of God as void, then as enemy, and finally as companion.³⁴

The call forward is a mingling of these modes of encounter. As enemy, God may be experienced as judgement, calling persons to move beyond their present actuality. But the full reception of the lure includes the experience of acceptance and love by the same One who calls individuals to change and grow. When God is known as companion, prayer becomes the opening to a friendship in which selfhood is not lost or set aside, but is affirmed in a manner which mobilizes and enables the person to undertake the risk of growth. Adoration and praise may become natural and spontaneous, and the companionship need not blur the radical distinction between the divine and human.

Prayer seems essential in the life of a Christian educator. It is a primary way in which the call forward may be known. It is an encounter with the One who calls, a way of reflecting in solitude about one's interaction with other persons. It is an experience of acceptance and of mobilization for self-transcendence. One may be

³⁴Alfred North Whitehead, Religion in the Making (New York: New American Library, 1960), p. 16.

empowered to care more about those persons encountered in the world, and one may become less needful of self-aggrandizement at others' expense. The style and mood with which one greets the world can contribute as much to the educational process as any formal concepts which one seeks to impart.

THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

The Christian educator also needs the fellowship of others who themselves choose to be open to the call forward. With others who seek to know God's presence in their lives, there is a possibility of mutuality in worship, in encouragement, in loving criticism, and in shared insight. Through the writings of historic persons of faith (as in the Bible and in traditional Christian literature), others' experience of the call forward can assist one's own awareness of its nature. In these ways, the community of faith encourages the individual. One discovers that community is a gift, and that within it the primary reality is the One who calls.

The classroom is a microcosm of the world where the call is often rejected or only dimly perceived. Christians are called to be "in but not of the world," secular but not secularists. Schubert Ogden makes the distinction in this way: secularity signifies a radical concern for the

welfare of the world; secularism denotes a valuing of the world as ultimate in and of itself, with no reference point, namely God, beyond it.³⁵ In the life of Jesus we see true secularity--the most radical caring for the world possible because the reality which gives it meaning lies beyond it. God was recognized as ultimate, and as the referent of love which gives the world its value and significance. To be in the world but not of it, means to be secular while rejecting secularism. It means loving the world because the world is loved by God.

In the classroom as in all human situations, there is always the tug towards secularism. If the instructor does not operate from a life of prayer and Christian community, there will be little power to stand over and against secularism while affirming secularity. The role of the Christian educator is to affirm the call toward true secularity as it presents itself through the lives of students and in the educational process. The instructor must recognize each student as beloved by the One who lures all persons beyond themselves into a fuller expression of unselfseeking love. The solitary experience of prayer and the shared life of worship and encouragement in the community of faith are essential for the Christian educator.

³⁵Schubert M. Ogden, The Reality of God and Other Essays (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 7ff.

In this dissertation, an underlying assumption has been made that one's view of reality influences the way one acts. Hence the idea of God as the creative actuality which calls persons forward into the novelty of richer and more inclusive qualitative experience suggests a choice of teaching methods. The God who affirms persons in the present and lures them into a novel future can be served in the classroom through the approaches outlined in this chapter. Contemporary educational departures such as the use of goals and objectives and the technique of values clarification can be helpful tools when used with discretion in the context of process theology. Each student is unique and valuable, called forward by the God who has always been at work in the world luring each unitary actuality into a richer subjectivity. The God who was in Christ calls each person into a self-transcending love in which the other's future is valued for its own sake.

There may be times when the ideas of God as suggested by Wieman and Whitehead are presented explicitly by the instructor. But the underlying reality of a God who calls can be served in the classroom in an implicit fashion through the methods described in this project.

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